

LJ 2001
-G 4041 T5







TIME IS A SEEDFIELD: ETERNITY THE HARVEST.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

PHILOMATHÆAN SOCIETY

OF

PENNSYLVANIA COLLEGE,

FEBRUARY 15, 1842.

BY HENRY W. THORP, A. M.

Principal of Gettysburg Female Seminary.

GETTYSBURG:
PRINTED AT THE JOURNAL OFFICE,
1842.

LII2001
G4041T5

In exchange
Peabody Institute
Baltimore
AUG 2 1928

Philomathæan Hall, Feb. 16th, 1842.

MR. THORP,

SIR,—Allow us, in behalf of the Philomathæan Society, to tender you their unfeigned gratitude for the very learned and pertinent address you did them the honor to pronounce on the evening of their eleventh anniversary, and respectfully to solicit a copy for publication.

Yours, truly,

JOHN M. RADEBAUGH,

MICHAEL DIEHL,

E. BREIDENBAUGH,

SYLVANDER CURTIS,

WILLIAM KOPP,

Committee of Arrangement.

Gettysburg Female Seminary, Feb. 17th 1842.

GENTLEMEN,—My humble address is at the entire disposal of the Philomathæan Society. I wish it were more worthy of their acceptance. I may be permitted, however, to claim for it this negative merit, that it was written with a sincere desire for the benefit of the Society.

I am, gentlemen,

Very faithfully,

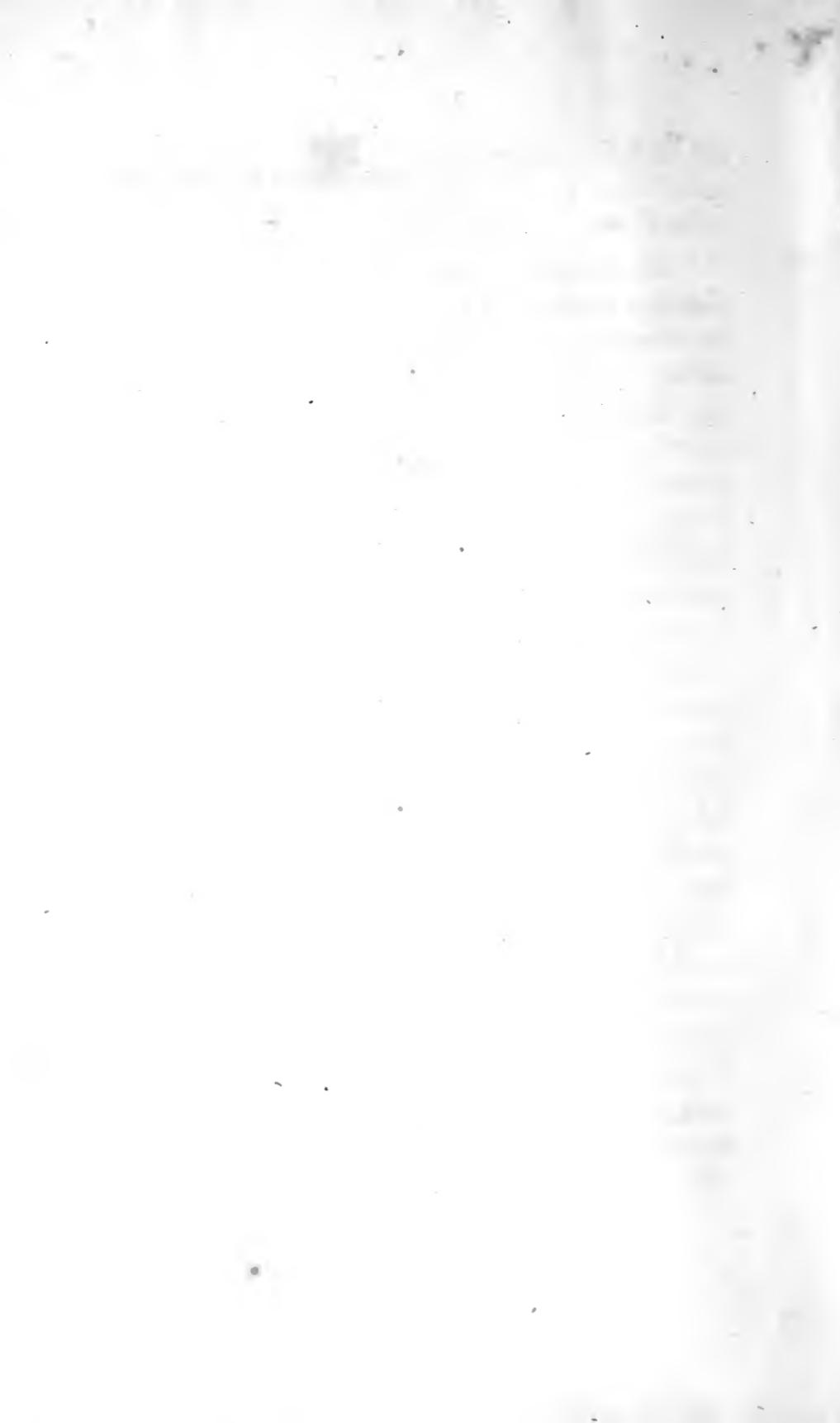
Yours,

HENRY THORP.

TO MESSRS. RADEBAUGH, DIEHL,

BREIDENBAUGH, CURTIS, KOPP,

Committee of Arrangement.



ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE
PHILOMATHÆAN SOCIETY,—

Revolving in my mind how I should best discharge the duty your friendly nomination imposed upon me, several subjects occurred to me which appeared calculated to afford you entertainment not unsuitable to the object of our assembling; but being impressed with the belief that something better than mere passing amusement for an idle hour should be attempted on such occasions, I at length determined, at the risk of being thought tedious, to endeavor to embody a few reflections of a graver character which have been for some time floating in my mind, and though, probably, they will not be new to you, if I do not over-estimate their importance, it may not be unprofitable to you to have them brought once more under your notice. Not to detain you longer with these prefatory remarks, I would beg you to consider for a moment, What should be the object of study?—and I would put the same question to myself—to all—for all mankind are students. From the cradle to the grave, every man above the idiot is constantly engaged in study: the scholar at his books, and the handicraftsman at his loom, are alike educating themselves, and either may study

for good or for ill. There is a knowledge of evil as well as of good, and it is worthy of remark, that when the Sirens of old sought to entice Ulysses to their fatal shores, it was with the promise of "new wisdom from the wise." Education, moreover, does by no means entirely consist in the acquisition of knowledge, but rather in the formation of habits; and are we not all daily forming or strengthening habits good or bad? To use the words of a wise man, we are all daily rising towards the angel or sinking towards the beast: there is no point of rest between the two extremes. The mind of the waking man is ever active and it is of the first importance that it be well employed;—the rather because our occupations here, and the habits these occupations generate, will have a direct influence on our future destiny;—because it is in our power now, and the very purpose of our existence in this world of wonders, to heap up treasures for another life;—because, in the quaint but expressive language of a living writer, *Time is a seed-field: Eternity the harvest.* Let me then ask you again, What is the object of your studies? and to assist you to answer the question to yourselves, I will, with your permission, pass briefly in review before you, a few of the most prominent motives by which I suppose various classes of students to be actuated, requesting each one to reflect to which of these classes he individually belongs.

There are men who appear to have no definite object before their minds: who pass their hours in listless idleness, or, with the semblance of activity, flit from volume to volume, from trifling occupation to trifling occupation, thoughtless as the butterflies of the summer's day, sipping honey-dew from every flower; and when the wintry storms arise, they have made no provision for the evil day; they have stored up no food for their support when the dreary landscape lies buried in snow; when the icy north sends forth its blasts, they have provided no refuge from their fury. Or if, perchance, they escape the fierce trials of adversity, if distress never assail them, affliction never befall them, surrounded with every blessing, they live discontented and unhappy amid their desultory occupations;—the sword is eating into its own scabbard;—oppressed with an overpowering sense that they are living in vain, that they are useless on this earth, where all have their appointed work; that they are burying the talent entrusted to them, and for which they know they must render an account. Do they now and then endeavor to rouse themselves from their supineness? The undisciplined mind is unequal to the vigorous and continued exertions which are required: after a few feeble efforts, they give up the task in despair, and, alas! they have lost for ever the power of mental application.

Others are ambitious: the applause of their fellow men is their goal, and none more eager in the race. For this they sit wakeful and watchful over the midnight lamp; day after day, night after night, the eager toil is urged; needful rest, and food, and recreation, are denied to the attenuated body; the hue of health deserts the cheeks, and strength the limbs, and too late the mistaken youth starts to a sense of his woful error, as he sinks into a premature grave. Or if his iron frame may bear the taxing, and he attain the coveted notoriety, *digito prætereuntium monstratus*; if he find himself gradually ascending, with toilsome steps and slow, to the summit of Fame's air-built temple; should he succeed in outstripping all competitors, and stand "in shape and gesture proudly eminent," the cynosure of the eyes of an admiring world, what has he gained?

The eager toy so keenly sought,
Has lost its joy by being caught.

In Literature or Art, in War or Politics, in Science or Philosophy, the world's applause is an inadequate reward:

"————— For from the birth
Of mortal man, the sovereign Maker said,
That not in humble nor in brief delight,
Not in the fading echoes of renown,
Power's purple robes nor Pleasure's flowery lap,
The soul should find enjoyment; but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Through all the ascent of things enlarge her view,

'Till every bound at length should disappear,
And infinite perfection close the scene."

An Alexander weeps that he has no more worlds to conquer, a Bruce sighs over the little hillock of green sod, the long-sought source of the plenty-giving Nile, and an Admirable Crichton perishes obscurely in a night-brawl, by the hand of an unworthy pupil. He who has most of the world's applause, best knows how little it is worth. **Surpass Homer or Æschylus in song, Cicero or Demosthenes in eloquence, Tacitus or Thucydides in history; let your pencil equal Raphael's in sweetness, or Titian's in color; strike out from the shapeless block a figure, beauteous as the Medicean Venus,**

"Where the goddess loves in stone,"
or his

"The Lord of the unerring bow,
The god of life, and poesy, and light,
The sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight;"

let your renown be co-extensive with the civilized world, 'tis after all, but as one passing by and leaving his foot-print in the sand.

A third class, perhaps the most numerous, study to fit themselves for some particular profession: and while this is a legitimate object when kept in due subordination to higher motives, it is a miserable mistake when this is all that is sought. Such a student Schiller well describes as a trader in science.

The only aim of his industry, is to fulfill those conditions under which he may become qualified for his post or profession, and participant in its advantages; such a man will, on the entrance to his academical career, have no more weighty concern than most carefully to sever those studies which he regards as means of subsistence, from all those which benefit the mind as mind alone. All the time devoted to these, he would think subtracted from his future profession, and would never forgive himself for the theft. Has he run through his academical course, and reached the goal of his wishes? he abandons his guide, for why should he trouble himself farther? The less his acquirements reward him in and for themselves, the larger remuneration does he crave from others. Not in the deep and hidden treasures of his own thoughts does he seek his reward: he seeks it in external applause, in titles and posts of honor or authority. Is he disappointed of these? Who is more unhappy than the man who has cultivated knowledge with no purer or higher aims? He has lived, he has toiled, he has watched in vain: in vain has he searched for Truth, if he cannot barter her in exchange for gold. "Pitiable man," exclaims Schiller, "who, with the noblest of all instruments, science and art, can execute no more than the artizan, with the meanest! who, in the empire of perfect freedom, bears about the soul of a slave!"

Some study that they may impart the knowledge they laboriously acquire, to benefit their fellow-men: and this is an object worthy of no small praise, for it is man's bounden duty to add, by all the means in his power, to the well-being of the common family of Adam, and he who ministers to the mind is not the least of benefactors. "There are infirmities," says the charming Sir Thomas Browne, "not only of Body but of Soul, and Fortunes which do require the merciful hand of our abilities. I cannot contemn a man for ignorance, but behold him with as much pity as I do Lazarus. It is no greater charity to clothe his body than to apparel the nakedness of his soul. It is an honorable object to see the reasons of other men wear our liveries, and their borrowed understandings do homage to the bounty of ours. It is the cheapest way of beneficence, and like the natural charity of the sun, illuminates another without obscuring itself. To be reserved and caitiff in this part of goodness, is the sordidest piece of covetousness; and more contemptible than the pecuniary avarice. To this, as calling myself a Scholar, I am obliged by the duty of my condition. I make not, therefore, my head a grave, but a treasure of knowledge. I intend no monopoly, but a community in learning. I study not for my own sake only, but for theirs who study not for themselves. I envy no man that knows more than myself, but pity those that know less.]

instruct no man as an exercise of my knowledge, or with an intent rather to nourish and keep it alive in my own head, than beget and propagate it in his; and in the midst of all my endeavors, there is but one thought that dejects me, that my acquired parts must perish with myself, nor can be legacied among my honored friends."

But there is still a higher object at which the wise will aim: the building up of himself; the perfecting his mental and moral faculties: this is man's chief business here on earth; compared to which, indeed, all other occupations sink into nothingness.

" For some seek knowledge merely to be known,
 And idle curiosity that is.
 Some but to sell, not freely to bestow;
 These gain and spend both time and wealth amiss,
 Embasing arts by basely deeming so:
 Some to build others which is charity,
 But those to build themselves who wise men be."

Men are placed here in this mysterious world, each one with a life given him from heaven with eternities depending on it for once and for no second time; each one's eternal destiny in his own hands. Our varied lots here are influenced by our parentage, our local habitation, and a thousand accidents, so called, beyond our own control, but not so in eternity. Each one will there have determined his own condition, either by having fulfilled the purpose of his disciplinary existence here, or chosen

rather the honors and the riches of this world.— Man's life here is a preparation for another: an opportunity to sow Time's seed-field with good seed: in any other view it is an anomaly, not in harmony with the holiness and the goodness and the beauty of God's creation: a dark spot on a fair tablet, a shapeless ruin amid surrounding symmetry. Man, though created for happiness, is not susceptible of it, and with reverence be it spoken, it is beyond the power of the Omnipotent to make him happy without making him other than he is: and let me entreat you not to expect the necessary change to be effected by a power above yourselves, suddenly and without any effort of your own, amidst the madness of a camp meeting for example, so that a man should be able to tell the day and the hour when he was all at once changed from the chosen companion of fiends to a fitness for the society of the spirits of the just made perfect;—believe it not! Moral qualities are not thus suddenly reversed, but the mighty change must be the work of unceasing toil through many years of painful yet hopeful effort; assimilation to the purity of God the aim, and he who faints not shall commence on earth, by patient continuance in well-doing, an humble imitation of the perfections of his Maker, a still increasing resemblance which shall continue through Eternity, like the asymptotes of the hyperbola, for ever approaching but never attaining its consummation.

And who shall say to what height of moral and intellectual perfection humanity may be raised by proper culture? It would seem that even here on earth our various powers are susceptible of almost unlimited improvement. Take as an example Memory, one of the most important of the mental faculties, without which, indeed, all the others were of little value, for we know what we remember and nothing more: what a vast disparity between the memories of different men! While one man has totally forgotten the subject of last Sunday's sermon, of a book he read but yesterday, or even an appointment made within the hour, a Cyrus recollects the name of the meanest soldier in his army, a Magliabecchi the situation of every volume in an extensive library, and a Porson is able to reproduce from memory an entire Greek Ms. which he had once read; and without implicit credence in the truth of these several stories, the fact even of their invention is conclusive evidence that these men must have possessed memories tenacious in no ordinary degree. Whence, then, I ask, this prodigious difference? Not so much from original diversity of constitution, (for neither are ideas innate nor is the power of recalling them) as because, while one man has suffered idea after idea to pass through his mind leaving no deeper impression than the reflection of the summer cloud on the bosom of the lake, the other has gradually acquired the power of fixing his attention, and this is

the secret of the disparity. Whatever can awake the attention will not fall from the memory; let him whose memory is the worst have some rich aged relative whose wealth he expects to inherit, I question much whether the periodical return of the occupant's birthday would escape the memory of the expectant, and whether, at each annual recurrence, he would have much difficulty in stating with precision the patriarch's age: and is all this to be retained in the memory so much more easily than a historical or philosophical sequence, the paradigm of a verb in *μι* or the demonstration of a geometrical theorem? It is in the power of every one to acquire a good memory; like all the other faculties, moral, mental, or corporeal, memory will be strengthened by use and dwindle by neglect.

But memory, so far from being treacherous, is the most faithful to its trust of all the powers of the mind: it never fails—it never will fail. Whatever is once fixed in the memory is fixed for ever, and not all Lethe's waters can wash it out. When the immortal spirit shall have quitted its frail tenement every thought, every action will recur in all its original force; will be with it and continue with it through all eternity. On the death-bed, when the connexion between mind and matter is well nigh severed, every physician knows how vividly the thoughts and occurrences of by-gone years, long it was supposed entirely forgotten, present themselves myste-

riously to the almost disembodied spirit. A man rescued when nearly drowned declares that his whole life had in the moment of danger been, as it were, lived over again: the whole period had, in some way which he could not explain, been simultaneously presented to him.

Instances in exemplification abound: not, however, to detain you too long, I will but recal to your remembrance one of the best authenticated. An illiterate servant girl lying on a bed of sickness is heard by her attendants to utter words to them unintelligible which are discovered by some educated gentlemen, whose attention has been drawn to the phenomenon to be Hebrew. On closer observation consecutive passages from the Hebrew Bible, and the writings of the Jewish Rabbins were recognized: a miracle was immediately proclaimed, and the circumstance certainly wore a very remarkable aspect: the woman, I believe, could not read at all: assuredly had never learnt Hebrew: yet she could repeat passage after passage without hesitation. But, fortunately for the interests of philosophy and truth, some of the gentlemen who heard her determined to investigate the matter more fully, and having made diligent inquiry into the young woman's history, at length discovered that she had been, many years before, a servant in the house of a clergyman, whose custom it was to walk up and down a corridor reading aloud in the hearing of this poor girl,

while at her work in a neighboring room. The miracle was thus at an end, but a psychological discovery of the greatest interest was made, which has since been frequently verified.

“Mysterious Memory, by what silver key
 Through years of silence, tuneless and unshaken
 Can thy sweet touch forgotten melody
 In the dim spirit once again awaken?”

If sounds without any meaning attached thus casually overheard are imprinted in the mind so firmly what can bad memory be but a want of power to recall ideas which are faithfully retained; a not knowing where, in that wondrous repository of “whatever old Time with his huge drag-net has conveyed down to us whether it be shells or shell-fish, jewels or pebbles, sticks or straws, sea-weeds or mud,” the pearl we seek lies hidden? There it is; there is all that ever entered but we have not accustomed ourselves to an orderly arrangement of our mental stores: the mind has been the mere passive recipient of what the current hour suggested instead of acting vigorously on all ideas presented to it; examining the relation of the new item of knowledge to other previous acquisitions, and putting it away properly labelled, as it were, into its appropriate depository. It is not the *helluo librorum*, crammed to repletion with a heterogeneous mass of facts unconnected and unarranged, who is to be considered the accomplished scholar, but he whose mind is an armoury well

stored with bright weapons all ranged in order, and ready for immediate use. Such a man was the learned Dr. Bentley, the greatest of English scholars, whose most extensive reading was all available to him in every emergency; who could with his single quill defend himself for years against the pertinacious attacks of the whole University of Oxford, aided by all the wits of that most witty time; and though the laugh of his contemporaries may have gone against him, in the unprejudiced judgment of posterity the victory was abundantly his. In reading his dissertation on the celebrated Phalaris controversy we are lost in astonishment at his apposite authorities, gathered from scholiasts and from authors whom but few ever look into: the whole of Ancient Literature seems at his command, and the quotation he needs is always drawn from its hiding-place however obscure.

But is not this permanency of impressions on the memory calculated to awaken reflections of the deepest import? If these things are so, can it be indifferent to us now, or unimportant hereafter, what ideas are to abide with us through endless ages? what seed we sow in Time's field which is to bear perennial fruit? Does it not seem that one element of our future happiness or misery is in our own hands in a higher sense than we have been accustomed to contemplate? Who does not shudder at the reflection that his most secret thought which he

dares not breathe to his bosom friend shall dwell with him to be his torment for ever where the worm dieth not? O should we not struggle strenuously as the victor at Elis, perseveringly as the Patriarch of old to keep our minds and hearts pure and spotless? Ought we not to shun worse than a thousand deaths the slightest inward thought of ill? Ought we not to be watchful lest a viper enter whose deadly sting shall for ever torment us? Ought we not to be careful how and what we study? what books we read? for many a fair chalice contains a poison which would continue its fearful workings world without end. Sweet as honey may the book be in our mouths, in our bellies it shall be bitter as wormwood. Nor is it to be supposed that if our very thoughts are to endure for ever, all traces of our actions will be obliterated. I presume every one will unhesitatingly admit that nothing happens by chance; that what we call chance is direction which we can not see; that the motion and course of every particle of water that dashes down the falls of Niagara are subjected to laws as certain as those which keep the planets in their orbits, and could be as easily determined by a Being possessed of great mathematical knowledge as the movements of a world.

Sir Chas. Babbage was led, by some very extraordinary combinations presented by his ingenious calculating machine, to pursue this idea to an extent startling at the first perusal, but which seems fully

justified by subsequent consideration. "Those aerial pulses, says Sir Charles, unseen by the keenest eye, unheard by the acutest ear, unperceived by human senses, are yet demonstrated to exist by human reason. If man enjoyed a larger command over mathematical analysis, his knowledge of these motions would be more extensive, but a being possessed of unbounded knowledge of that science could trace every the minutest consequence of that primary impulse. Such a being, however far exalted above our race, would still be immeasurably below even our conception of Infinite Intelligence. Whilst the atmosphere we breathe is the ever-living witness of the sentiments we have uttered, the waters, and the more solid materials of the globe bear equally enduring testimony to the acts we have committed. If the Almighty stamped on the brow of the first murderer the indelible and visible mark of his guilt he has also established laws by which every succeeding criminal is not less irrevocably chained to the testimony of his crime; for every atom of his mortal frame, through whatever changes it may migrate, will still retain adhering to it through every combination some movement derived from that very muscular effort by which the crime itself was perpetrated. The soul of the Negro whose fettered body, surviving the living charnel-house of his infected prison, was thrown into the sea to lighten the ship that his *Christian* master might escape the limited

justice at length assigned by civilized man to crimes whose profits had long gilded their atrocity, will need at the last great day no living witness of his earthly agony. When man and all his race shall have disappeared from the face of our planet ask every particle of air still floating over the unpeopled earth, and it will record the cruel mandate of the tyrant. Interrogate every wave which breaks unimpeded on ten thousand desolate shores and it will give evidence of the last gurgle of the waters which closed over the head of the dying victim; confront the murderer with every corporeal atom of his immolated slave, and in its still quivering movements he will read the prophet's denunciation of the prophet king, —Thou art the man.”

Thus, then, will the record of our every action be legible to the assembled worlds. There needs no accusing angel to fly up to heaven's chancery with the evidence of our guilt; there is no recording angel to blot out the word with a tear; for we are hourly registering our own deeds and words on the great tablet of the Universe, and at the awful day of reckoning the legend will stand out plain as the hand-writing on Belshazzar's wall and wait no Daniel to expound the characters.

“In the corrupted currents of this world
 Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice;
 And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
 Buys out the law: but 'tis not so above.

There is no shuffling: there the action lies
 In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled,
 Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
 To give in evidence."

What manner of Universe is this, then, where we are hemmed in on all sides with the consequences of each day's actions and these consequences extend to the eternal world: encoiled within the great chain of cause and effect, more firmly than Laocoön within the serpent's folds, from which all escape or respite for a single moment is impossible! Well may the affrighted soul exclaim how dreadful is this place! And yet misunderstand not, suppose not for a single instant that God needs this record lest past events should glide from His memory. To Him there can be neither past nor future: His whole existence is one extended *Now*, His knowledge admits of no increase and no change.

Great, Incomprehensible Majesty of Heaven, to Thee the creation and the judgment day are simultaneous; already to Thee the last trump has sounded; the reprobates are in the flames, and the righteous gathered into Abraham's bosom.

Let us then well consider, consider with no hasty glance but with an earnestness commensurate to the momentous consequences which depend on our decision, what are proper objects of study; and having made our choice, let us pursue them with an untiring step, deterred by no difficulties, yielding to no

opposition, turning not aside to the right hand or the left. Though here the *Improba Siren Desidia* allure us to repose on couches soft as the bed of Sleep himself, and there Calypso's flowery paths appearing to run parallel to the road we are travelling tempt us with a thousand charms, yet will we not quit our course, rugged and dusty though it be, nor pause in our journey though the sluggard exclaim there is a lion in the way. Up, Sluggard! let us slay the lion; for the road must be travelled. Now and through life let *age quid agis* be inscribed upon our banners. Whatever we do let us do it in earnest. Let us never be content to stand with folded arms and say the object is unworthy of the effort; it may be so, but it is of the utmost importance to us to acquire well disciplined minds and habits of assured attention. Whatever is the occupation of the hour, whether reading a dry treatise, listening to a dull sermon, or a still duller address, always fix your minds intently and check in the beginning the wandering of the thoughts like the eyes of the fool to the ends of the earth. The gift may be too large for Perdiccas to receive but Alexander must not bestow less. That whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well is a maxim we should never forget. Our life is so short that we must up and be doing: we have no time to trifle, to loiter on our way, to lie listless on the river's brink till its current shall flow by. When we first awake to consciousness in this

world we find ourselves, methinks, as in a boat without oars or rudder floating rapidly down the stream of time: we amuse ourselves for a while in playing with the straws which are swimming on the surface, or in admiring as we glide along the fair flowers on the river's bank but we may not stay to gather them: onward proceeds our little bark with increased velocity: at length we hear the roaring of the cataract but it seems distant and we heed it not: onward goes the boat; the sound of the foaming waters grows louder, but we cannot check our course. Onward, ever onward, speeds the boat; and perhaps we wake not to a full sense of our position till it is on the brink of the yawning gulf, and with shuddering recoil we sink into the abyss.

O trifle not when so much depends on yourselves. No one in this world can afford to trifle and least of all the student. The trifler sows Time's Seed-Field with chaff, and when the days of harvest come, lo! there is no crop; for Nature grows not chaff, and he who would reap in age must sow good seed in youth, he who would reap in eternity must sow good seed in time. Are there difficulties in the way? so are there in the way of all: 'tis but the common lot,

“—— nil sine magno
~ Vita labore dedit mortalibus,”

and few difficulties offer long resistance to vigorous effort; they fly like the visible horizon before those

who advance. Go forward and some unseen path will open among the hills. Contend unyielding with the Palafox watch-word, *War to the Knife!* and be assured ye *shall* conquer for the battle itself is victory.

But difficulties! Gentlemen, what difficulties have we? Consider what was the position of the student before the invention of printing; in the total absence of elementary books; when one of the largest libraries known, that of the Counts of Benavente contained no more than 150 volumes and many of these were duplicates; when an estate was to be given for a book which now may be had for a dollar;* and when at such a cost the treasure was obtained the eye could not pass lightly as now over the hot-pressed page but it was written in a cramped crabbed hand rendered still more obscure by the multitude of contractions which the scarcity of writing materials introduced and perpetuated. Yet observing the goodly list of honored names which those evil times have handed down to us, reflecting that every now and then there arose one and another whose attainments would have done honor to any age, and that in the darkest periods there never failed a little band to keep alive and pass the torch, I am deeply grateful to the good Providence of God

*In the year 690 Alfred the wise of Northumbria gave 800 acres of land for a single volume containing the history of the World.

which inspired these men with such patient industry for our advantage in these latter days and humbled to the dust that we make so poor a use of our superior facilities. Permit me to carry your thoughts back a thousand years of the world's history and point out to you a successful student of the ninth century. Of royal parentage and himself a king, in his youth without books or instructors, in his manhood without leisure or tranquillity, engaged for years in the defence of his country against enemies whom no treaties could bind, no generosity move, at one disastrous period a fugitive reduced to take refuge in a herdsman's hut, you will have perceived that I am speaking of our glorious Alfred, suffering, moreover, all his life from a painful disease, we find him devoting himself to study with all a lover's ardor: nor were his studies confined to barren speculations or merely resorted to as a sweet relief from the fatigues of government or the toils of war; but even the few hours his weighty duties left him were employed in the service of mankind. Let the modern student in his comfortable chamber, zealous instructors at his elbow and thousands of volumes at his command, if he is ever disposed to complain of difficulties, picture to himself this scion of a race of kings in his smoky, chimneyless palace, the winds of heaven entering at a thousand chinks, even compelling him to use lanterns to make his light burn steady. Some of the fruits of his lengthened vigils

remain to us; translations into the language of his beloved subjects from the Holy Scriptures, from Boetius, from Orosius, from the *Meditations* of St. Austin and from any work within his reach which he hoped would humanize his people, interspersed again and again with most beautiful thoughts from his own pen. Such obstructions as beset the path of Alfred may not now exist for any, yet for our encouragement there still occasionally occur instances of opposition bravely met; of difficulties, compared to which ours vanish, steadily surmounted.

In the latter half of the 15th century, the son of a poor boat-builder of Utrecht was seen, night after night, studying intently at the corners of the streets by the light of the public lamps for he was unable to purchase a candle: That poor boy gradually rose to be the head of the Roman Church, Pope Adrian VI.

Think of the boy-hood of the learned Heyne; read his pathetic description of his mother in tears and wringing her hands because she had no food to give her hungry children: see him ragged and bare-footed running and leaping along the streets, tossing his loaf of bread high into the air, because his god-father, the baker, had promised to pay a few pence per week to enable him to learn Latin; though he was even then compelled to write out each day's lesson, for he could procure no books of his own. Again, see Gifford, the late honored Editor of the

Quarterly Review, a shoemaker's apprentice sitting up in his garret studying Algebra, compelled for want of pen or paper to work his problems on scraps of leather with a blunted awl. The eminent Chemist, Sir Michael Faraday, was a poor journeyman bookbinder. What situations could be more hopeless for students than these, yet these men and hundreds of others whose names might be added persevered against hope till well-merited success crowned their efforts: diligent laborers in Time's Seed-field they at length reaped an abundant reward.

And now, Gentlemen, having suggested what appear to me the most powerful motives for Self-culture that can operate on mortal man, it may be expected that, before I conclude, I should point out how the task is to be performed, that I should shew in what Self-culture consists, and deduce particular rules from the principles which have been laid down: but having already trespassed so long on your kind indulgence, I can merely make a few brief and general remarks. And first, I would say, remember that in all your studies and in all your life, Truth, Eternal Truth is to be sought with a single heart: for falsehood is an evil seed and can produce but evil fruit. Truth indeed, says Milton, came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look upon. But when He ascended and His apostles after Him were laid asleep then straight arose a wicked race of deceiv-

ers who as that story goes of the Egyptian Tryphon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since the sad friends of Truth, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. Be it ours, Gentlemen, to join the search.

What a bright example of sincerity was exhibited by the great Newton after his magnificent conception of the simple laws which regulate the planetary motions! When, from a latent error in his elements, his careful calculations of the moon's revolutions showed a variation of about one sixth for which he could not account, preferring Truth to Reputation, he at once dismissed his hypothesis as false and appears to have thought no more of it for years; till at length, a more accurate measurement of a terrestrial degree having been made, he repeated his calculations with the corrected degree, and he was well rewarded for his noble sacrifice; his conjecture became certainty, one of the sacred limbs of Truth at once and for ever to be united to the rest. Such is said to have been Sir Isaac's agitation when the calculation was drawing to a close and coming out as he hoped that he was unable to carry it on and a friend completed it for him. Truth alone indeed

may not constitute a great man, but it is the most important element in a great character. Whatever you undertake to do, do it in sincerity with your might. He whose heart is not in his work is a mere hollow quack: he is deceiving all who have the misfortune to employ him and he is still more fatally deceiving himself; for he is generating in himself habits of negligence which will cling to him with the tenacity of the old man of the mountain. Do good to all, for God is good, and one act of goodness will make its successor easier and the deed itself is its own rich reward; for beneficence also grows by being exercised. Have always

“A tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity.”

Let no opportunity of doing even a little good escape you.

“Great blessings to bestow we wish in vain
But all may shun the guilt of giving pain:
And he whose kind and gentle hand removes
The obstructing thorn that wounds the friend he loves,
Smooths not another’s rugged path alone
But scatters roses to adorn his own.”

I would have you beneficent, not for the sake of the little good you may have it in your power to do to others but for your own advancement towards the perfection at which it is your duty to aim; and the old man who, unmoved by the scoffings of the self-

ish and the sneers of the worldly-wise, was planting trees that future generations might enjoy their friendly shelter, was but humbly imitating the beneficence of his Master who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Drive away the starving suppliant from your door: the loss is not his but your own. He may obtain from your more charitable neighbor the relief which your churlishness refused him but your hard heart has become harder by the deed; you have taken a step in your downward course and are more than before unfitted for that happy place where Charity never faileth. Cultivate also habits of order for the works of God are orderly, and flatter not yourselves that it is a mark of genius to despise order: this is a rock on which thousands of gallant barks have struck.

But perhaps some one is ready to remark: Seek self-perfection and the good of all mankind! Be strenuous, persevering, sincere, a lover of Order, and a lover of Truth! there is nothing here more suited to the student than to the peasant, the learned than the ignorant, the inmate of the College halls than the tenant of a cottage: and it is true there is not. Nor is wisdom confined to the chamber of the student, nor does she consist in the possession of large libraries or even of great knowledge. Many a gray-haired peasant, whose whole library is his Bible and his Prayer-book, is a wiser and a better

man, than the haughty scholar who contemns him. Many a poor Pariah who knows no book but the book of Nature is a wiser and a better and a happier man (for wisdom and goodness *are* happiness) than the lordly Brahmin who would deem himself polluted should the Pariah's breath but reach him: for to the pure in heart all nature is filled with lessons of wisdom.

“————— In solitudes

Her voice comes to him through the whispering woods
 And from the fountains and the odors deep
 Of flowers.
 And from the breezes whether low or loud
 And from the rain of every passing cloud
 And from the singing of all summer birds
 And from all sounds all silence.”

A man who has been shut out from the knowledge of books may yet have sedulously cultivated his moral feelings and it unhappily is sometimes found that where there is an excellent head the heart is merely a piece of hard flesh. This, however, is not the probable, nor the usual result of even mental culture; nor do I undervalue the immense advantages the scholar possesses if he be but true to himself and make a proper use of them. To him is opened the rich store-house of all that the wise and good of former ages have left, history to inform, philosophy to improve and poetry to delight him. It is the scholar's own fault if he have occa-

sion to complain that he has spent his time for nought and labored without reward. Richly were he repaid for all his labors if he could read no more than the wondrous peripeteia in the closing books of the Iliad—the Greeks on the verge of despair, most of the chiefs lying wounded, Patroclus dead, the whole army dispirited, the very wall which they had built around their fleet as a last refuge broken down, Hector and his victorious troops pressing irresistible to fire the ships, Agamemnon himself counselling flight while means of escape remain, when one man arises in his might and the scene instantly how changed! From that decisive moment the fate of Hector and of Troy is sealed and the action hurries on without pause or rest, gods and men mingling in the fearful strife, Simoeis and Scamander rushing to engulf the dauntless Achilles whose death-dealing sword has crowded their channels with the slain, and Vulcan wrapped in flames hastening to his rescue, still nothing can appease Achilles' direful wrath but Hector's life-blood: **Hector**, beloved by gods and men, must fall: **Hector**, who should have been the gentle poet's hero if the tempestuous times had permitted him to gratify the yearnings of his heart; for on his peaceful virtues the poet's kindred spirit loves to dwell and amid the fierce victor's exultation, no reader of Homer and, I dare believe, no enraptured listener in the ancient banquet hall to the rhapsodist's inspiring song but

has sighed at the unworthy fate of the Hector whom we love.

Again, may not the scholar read delighted, the dark fatality of the Athenian drama; in what mysterious ways the awful decrees of destiny are fulfilled by the very means intended to avert them? May he not read the mighty woes of Oedipus and, for the hundredth time, await with breathless anxiety the dread discovery which is to hurl from the summit of human felicity the monarch enthroned in his subjects' love, their former deliverer from the abhorred Sphinx, how dark and deep a fall! Another radiant page displays the benevolent Prometheus, him who conferred on our miserable race the blessing of fire and taught us how to use it (in these latter days of triumphant science the reader can not refrain from passing in his mind the incalculable benefits we have derived from the gift) and who does not sympathize with this gracious benefactor of mankind chained to the Caucasian rock, exposed alike to winter's cold and summer's scorching noon, yet rising godlike above his sufferings and master of the fate of his persecutor till he has been considered a heathen type of our blessed Savior himself upon the cross? Thousands of fountains of innocent delight and of wisdom are opened to the scholar from which the illiterate are debarred. When wearied with the turmoils of the world how sweet to retire to the peaceful study and forget the present in converse

with the sages of ancient times! Books are companions in solitude and the charm of society, the soothers of affliction and the grace of prosperity, for books, says Milton, are not absolutely dead things but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are: nay they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them.

“This books can do, nor this alone; they give
 New views to life and teach us how to live.
 They soothe the grieved, the stubborn they chastise,
 Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise.
 Their aid they yield to all; they never shun
 The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone.
 Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
 They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd,
 Nor tell to various people various things,
 But shew to subjects what they shew to Kings.”

Who shall estimate the value of books to old age when the enfeebled limbs refuse their work and the grasshopper is a burden; and the mind, deriving little pleasure from the external world, is thrown upon its own resources?

While they who in youth have made no provision for age are left like an unsheltered tree stripped of its leaves, its branches shaking and withering before the cold blasts of winter; the age of a man of cultivated mind is often more complacent and even more luxurious than the youth. It is the reward of his due use of the endowments bestowed by nature:

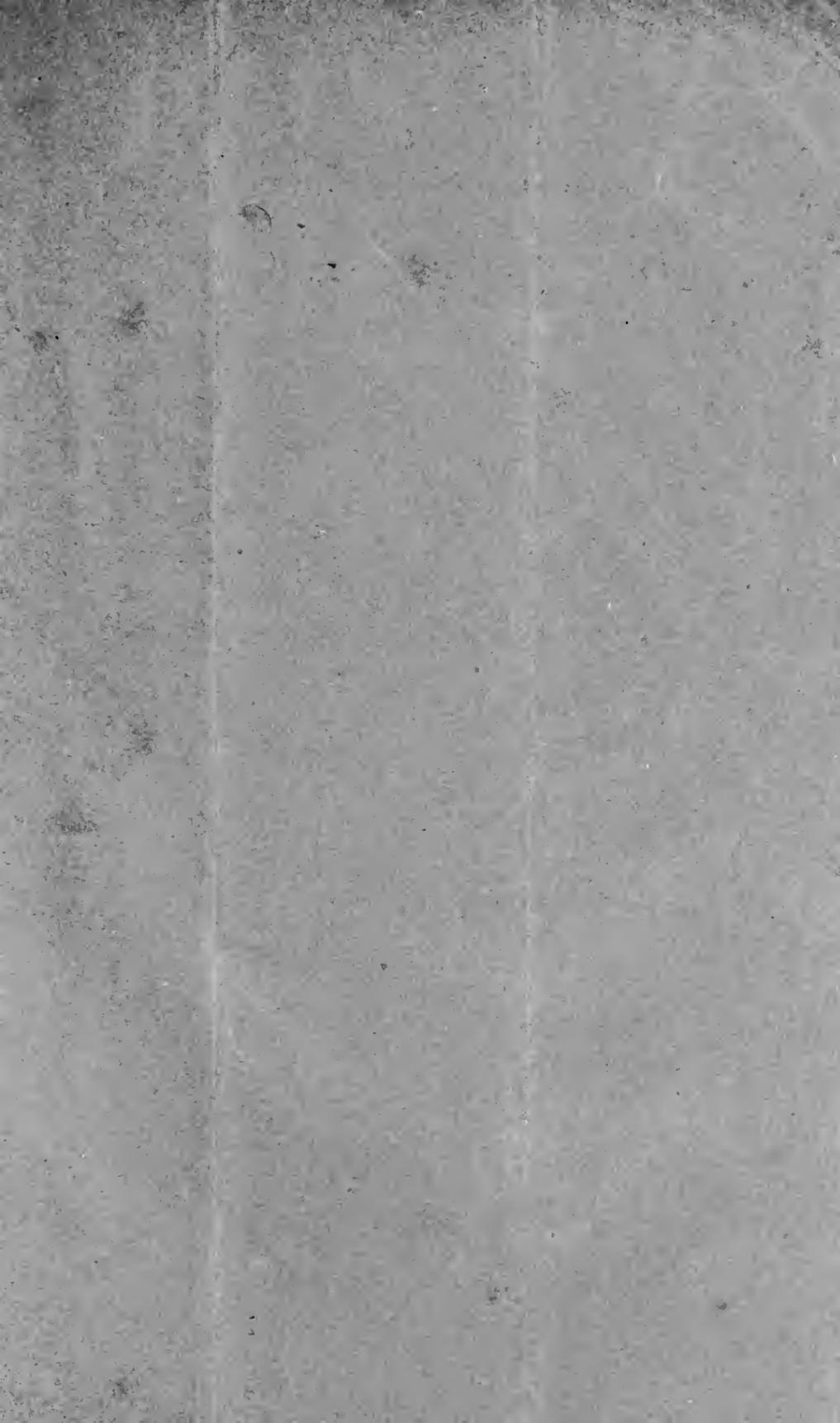
and when he dies his thoughts, reminiscences and intellectual acquirements die with him to this world but to this world only. If they are what they ought to be they are treasures laid up for heaven. That which is of the earth earthy perishes with wealth, rank, honors, authority and other earthly and perishable things but nothing that is worth retaining can be lost. Affections well placed and dutifully cherished, friendships happily formed and faithfully maintained, knowledge acquired with worthy intent and intellectual powers that have been diligently improved as the talents which our Lord and Master has committed to our keeping, these will accompany us into another state of existence as surely as the soul in that state retains its identity and its consciousness.

“For all that’s gained of all that’s good
 When time shall this weak frame destroy,
 (Its use then rightly understood,)
 Shall man in happier state enjoy.
 Oh! argument for truth divine,
 For study’s cares, for virtue’s strife;
 To know the enjoyment will be thine
 In that renewed, that endless life.”

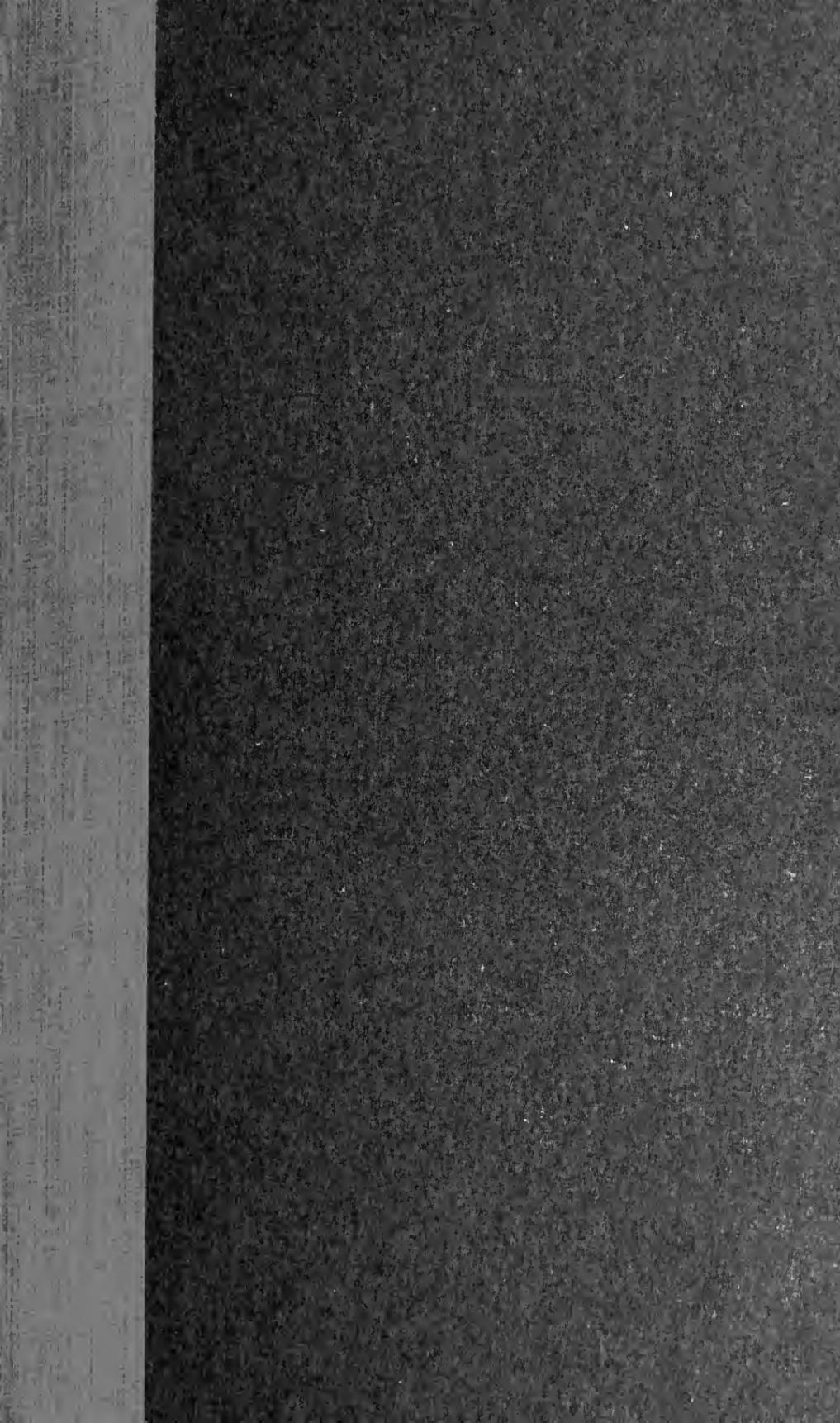
And now, Gentlemen, to conclude, what I have sought to impress upon you, to the best of my poor ability, is my entire conviction that our condition when we shall have shuffled off this mortal coil and, by separation from the organs of sense, are instant-

aneously cut off from all communion with the material world will result directly from the degree of culture our minds and souls shall have received. I would not have you rest upon the general conclusion that the virtuous will be happy; the wicked miserable: for I am firmly convinced that the particular kind of happiness or misery will be the direct result of a particular cause as truly as the nature of the crop depends on the nature of the seed: that the moral qualities of the soul will not be changed in kind though possibly developed in degree: that as the tree falls it will lie. For example, that a man who has been envious to the day of his death will continue envious for ever, and will consequently by his own act and deed be irrevocably shut out from all hope of happiness; for no one will suppose the envious could be happy even in heaven itself: the universal joy would but furnish additional food for the malignant passion and add directly to his misery. That the recollection and the consequences of our actions here will accompany us into the world of spirits is evidenced alike by Reason and Revelation. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap, *that* and not some other thing, and if here, its voice drowned by the diversions and occupations of the world, and its stings blunted by the dullness of our earthly body, a disturbed conscience has the power to cry: Sleep no more! Macbeth shall sleep no more! what mortal tongue shall describe, what

mortal heart conceive the tortures of him who must bear the goadings of his evil passions and the companionship of his evil thoughts for ever and for ever? Is happiness then your desire? It is; for all desire it. Let it be through life the first object of your study to qualify yourselves for it by opposing every imagination, every thought which an angel might not entertain, and by cultivating, as much as in you lies, the kindly feelings which will fill the minds and constitute the happiness of those who shall be judged worthy to be placed at God's right hand, and believe me, Gentlemen, those qualities which you *must* possess to be happy hereafter will make you happy even here.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 892 259 9